

Molly

She Sold Butter and Eggs, but Carried a Revolver

By GEORGE ARNOLD WELSH

In the summer of 1863, when the Army of the Cumberland was at Murfreesboro, Tenn., preparatory to the move on Tullahoma, the general commanding called for volunteers for secret service. One young man who reported was entirely devoid of a beard and had ruddy cheeks and blue eyes. "You could go anywhere as a girl," said the general, "and as long as your sex is not suspected you would be safer in skirts than in trousers."

"My hair is too short," said the youngster. "It is long enough to cut square around your neck, and that's the way girls up to eighteen about here wear their hair. Would you like to try it?" "I wouldn't mind, general."

"Well, I want you to go down to Tullahoma and learn what you can. Bring me back a statement of the defenses, the guns on them, their caliber and the number and condition of Bragg's army encamped in and about the town."

The next morning a Tennessee countryman left the Union picket line at Murfreesboro with a basket on her arm, taking the direct turnpike to Tullahoma. Stopping at a farm, she bought a supply of eggs and butter, which she put into her basket, and on reaching the vedettes of the Confederate army told them that she came from a farm up the road and was going into Tullahoma to make a little money by supplying the soldiers with her farm produce.

Molly Atkins—this was the name the farm girl gave herself—had no difficulty passing into Tullahoma. What troubled her was that no soldier was the soldiers on the picket line to buy her goods that the supply was exhausted before she entered the town. However, she had plenty of money and went about among the shops buying such supplies as farmers needed which they could not raise themselves. Having refilled her basket, she cast about for a place to lodge, for she had no idea of leaving Tullahoma for several days. Passing a house occupied by General Bragg's headquarters, she noticed that if she could find a lodging near it she might obtain information by keeping an eye on what was going on there. So she knocked at the doors of several houses on the opposite side of the street till she found a family who was willing to take in a country girl for a few days who had come to town to make some purchases. She was given a room in the third story, or rather, the peak of the roof from which she could look out down on General Bragg's headquarters.

Officers and messengers were coming and going, citizens were applying for passes, while a sentinel paced back and forth before the house, every few minutes stopping and facing to salute an officer passing in or out. Molly couldn't see anything to be derived from this, so she sallied forth to visit the camps and the defenses of the town. Having picked up all the information available in this way, she returned to her lodging and, entering up her purchases, went over to headquarters to ask for a pass to leave Tullahoma. An aid-de-camp, a young man about twenty-two years old, was in charge of the granting of passes, and, seeing a pretty girl come in, was quite beside himself with admiration. Molly showed him the articles she had purchased, telling him that they had been bought with money derived from the sale of butter and eggs. He was convinced that she was what she represented herself to be, but he had explicit orders from his general that he should grant no passes to persons going northward, and he dare not disobey. Molly appeared disappointed, and when the aid looked at her sympathetically cast her blue eyes down at the floor.

"How far beyond the picket line do you live?" asked the aid. "Not very far," Molly replied. "I tell you what you do. Meet me just within the picket post on the Murfreesboro road tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, and I'll see what I can do for you. I can't write you a pass, for that's contrary to orders, but I may be able to get you home. You see, I might go with you and satisfy myself that you are what you purport to be, then you wouldn't carry information and all that. In this case it wouldn't be any harm for me to leave you at home, and I wouldn't be acting contrary to my orders."

Molly thanked the young man, looking very demure and modest, and with drew. The following morning on dressing she examined a revolver she had carried strapped to her waist under her skirt, since she would very likely have need for it, she tried to think of a place on her person where it would be concealed and yet be easily grasped. Fortunately in those days there was usually a pocket in a woman's dress, and Molly, having made a search, discovered one. She slipped her revolver into it.

Shortly before 10 o'clock she started up toward the picket post. Hearing the sound of horse's hoofs behind her she did not look around, but presently heard the aid bid her good morning.

"Go to the picket post," he said, "and pretend you didn't know you must

have a pass to get through the lines. I'll ride up on a tour of inspection and ask what's the matter. Don't let on you've ever seen me before. I'll do the rest."

"How kind you are!" exclaimed Molly in a burst of gratitude, and she proceeded on her way, while the aid turned off in another direction to make a circuit. When Molly reached the picket post and, having been refused an exit, was beginning to force tears into her blue eyes the young officer rode up, inspected the post, then asked what was the matter with the girl. Having been informed, he said to the officer in command of the post:

"I'll take her home and see that she is what she represents herself to be. If so I'll leave her there and no harm done. I'm Captain Robbins of the general staff."

The settled matter, and Molly went on. Robbins, walking his horse beside her. Picket posts are usually placed at points where the road is visible for some distance ahead, and so long as they were in sight Captain Robbins was not so galled as to give the girl his horse, but when they had passed over a crest he dismounted and assisted her to his place, which she accepted with alacrity. For a time he made no mention of the distance they had to reach her farm, for he had taken a desperate fancy to the blue-eyed beauty and was pleased at being in her company. But after the vedettes were passed and he was in debatable territory he began to think that he might come upon some bluejackets and he was not safe. He asked Molly if her home was not near, and she replied that it was just beyond the next turn in the road. When they reached the turn she told him it was just over the next crest. When they were descending from the crest she pointed ahead, telling him that he might see an eagle of her home just above a clump of trees. While he was peering to discover it Molly reined in her horse so as to drop a little behind him. Suddenly he heard a click. To a soldier in wartime a click means a good deal. The officer turned and saw Molly pointing a revolver at him.

"What do you mean?" he stammered, puzzled.

"Face about and move on!"

The voice, which had been skittishly modulated, had now the hoarseness of a man's. It flashed across Robbins that he had been sold. He started to put a hand to his hip, but was deterred by an order:

"Stop that! Hands up!"

It was plain from the tone in which the words were spoken that any further movement in the direction of the revolver would be met with a bullet before the weapon could be reached. Robbins hesitated, raising his hands above his shoulders.

"Now you face about and march right quick!" came a second order.

There was nothing for it but to obey. Molly had drawn him to a point well beyond the Confederate picket line, and there was no assistance to be expected. They were on a strip of territory free from either army, inhabited by Confederate sympathizers and roving bands of guerrillas, who usually sympathized with the southern side. Therefore the danger was far greater to the Federal than the Confederate soldier, and the penalty if captured was infinitely more terrible to the former than to the latter. His landing within the Union lines would be humiliating, but nothing more than serving a term as prisoner of war. But if Molly were captured, a Federal soldier in disguise with information of the Confederate forces on her person—the inevitable result would be a hanging.

Only the keenest watchfulness and a cool head enabled her to drive her captive over the considerable distance that lay between her and the Federal lines. Once she saw half a dozen horsemen ahead, and since they looked brown rather than blue she knew they were not Union troops. She drove the man in front of her into a wood and waited till the coming men had passed. Again she saw a house ahead, around which several persons were loitering. She made a detour, but in doing so was obliged to leave her horse.

Being now on foot, she disarmed Robbins and had two revolvers instead of one. But it was not weapons she needed; it was to escape wayfarers. Now and again she would stop to listen. The distant creaking of a wagon, the thud of horse's hoofs, would drive her, she still driving her captive, into cover. At last she heard a distant shot. A soldier in that country at that time knew a picket shot by instinct. This one must be from a Federal musket. The northern picket line was not far distant. The last scare Molly had was when, crossing a road, she saw on her flank a cloud of dust. Not stopping to satisfy herself who caused it, she pushed her prisoner on. A ridge was in front of her, which she recognized as one favorable for a picket line. Then from a field before it came:

"Halt there!"

Molly cheerfully obeyed the order, for she knew that the man who halted her was no southerner, since he spoke with a German accent. She told her story, the man called for the officer of the picket, and the goal was won.

"Captain," she said as soon as the race was finished, "it has been a question of capture for you or a rope for me."

The captain made no reply.

Molly went, dressed as she was, to the general's headquarters, reported the success of her mission and furnished the information she had been sent to get. The next morning commenced that movement which, though comparatively bloodless, was one of the most trying of the war—the Tullahoma campaign.

A BIT OF NAVAL HISTORY.

Origin of the Corps of Professors of Mathematics.

Before the Naval Academy was established midshipmen received their education entirely on board ship. Their technical education was obtained in the school of experience, helped out occasionally by the voluntary efforts of the older line officers. Their general education was at first neglected, but later instructors were appointed for service on ships that carried midshipmen. These were appointed by the secretary of the navy for stated periods, much as civilian instructors at the Naval Academy are appointed at the present time. In 1842 a general order was issued providing that they should live and mess with lieutenants. They were commissioned in 1848, but specific rank was not given them until the general reorganization of all staff corps during the civil war.

Late Professor H. H. Lockwood, U. S. N., in some very interesting reminiscences read before the Naval Academy Graduates' association in 1893 relates how the corps of professors of mathematics came to be formed. In the early days of the Naval Academy he was one of its instructors. He had had service in the army, and in the development of the course of instruction he determined, after consultation with the superintendent, to give the midshipmen a little infantry drill. This did not suit the proud spirits of the young gentlemen of that day, and to show their disapproval of this and other efforts of the professor they hung him in edgely. An investigation and a court martial followed on the charge of insulting a superior officer.

The defense put up the plea that the instructor was not a superior officer. Such a condition is hard to understand at this time, when the status of officers, instructors and midshipmen at the Naval Academy is well defined, but at that time midshipmen were officers, while instructors had no official standing. The plea was technically correct, and to punish the guilty midshipmen it was found necessary to substitute charges in which the anomalous position of the professor in the naval service could not be made to enter. Upon these the guilty midshipmen were condemned and punished. This incident led to an amendment in the naval appropriation bill of 1848 giving authority for the commissioning of twelve professors of mathematics.—Commander U. T. Holmes in Engineering Magazine.

A Simple Get-rich-quick Scheme.

Take 1,000,000 cats and get rich quick. This is the advice of the Liberator of Paris to its readers. The prescription is quite simple. A million cats will supply you with 12,000,000 kittens a year. The skins are worth a little over 25 cents each, so there you have a daily gross revenue of about \$10,000. To skin the cats you will have to employ 100 men, who will charge you \$2 per fifty cats. Your net revenue will thus be reduced to about \$8,000 a day. It should cost you nothing to feed your cats. Start a ratery. Rats breed four times as fast as cats, so the cats can have a daily diet of four rats apiece, which is ample. To feed the rats, perfectly skinned. Give them the skinned cats. One cat will be ample for four rats. The scheme works out simply and automatically. The cats eat the rats, the rats eat the cats, and you have the skins.

The Chapel of Bones.

One of the most interesting sights of Malta and at the same time rather a gruesome one is the Chapel of Bones. Guides who show visitors round the island never fail to point this out. The whole of the sides, arches and about the altar are the skulls and crossbones of the long departed monks. In niches round the chapel stand skeletons of monks in their habits. On either side of the altar stands a skeleton representing Father Time with a scythe. Standing at the rear of the chapel one cannot but admire and wonder at the regular manner in which the skulls and bones are placed.

How Parchment Got Its Name.

The Greeks of Pergamus are said to have first prepared parchment from the skins of the goat or sheep. They were cured, deprived of all fat, thinned uniformly by the knife, dried or whitened and finally rubbed down with pumice stone to a smooth and even surface. Called parchment from the city of its origin, the new material became parchment in archaic French and parchment in the English tongue.—National Magazine.

Squeal and Bark.

"Nothing lost here but the squeal," declared the port packer. "Are you as economical in conducting your business?"

"Just about," answered the visitor. "I'm in the lumber business. We waste nothing but the bark."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

It Fell.

"What's that racket down there?" shouted the old gentleman from the head of the stairs.

"I think," promptly replied his daughter, "that it was Bob dropping his neck when he proposed to me."—Detroit Free Press.

Reassuring Him.

"But," said the absolutely bald old party, "can I be assured that this horse is quite gentle?"

"My dear sir," replied the tricky dealer, "he wouldn't hurt a hair of your head."—Catholic Standard and Times.

Everything we endure patiently is a key to something beautiful we could never enter otherwise.

FRENCH AND GERMAN COLORS.

Supposed Origin of the Tricolor and the Teuton Flag.

For five centuries black and white have been the Hohenzollern colors, and the first verse of the German war song, "Ich bin ein Preusse," is:

"I am a Prussian! Know ye not my banner?"

Before me floats my flag of black and white!

My fathers died for freedom; 'twas their manner.

So say these colors floating in your sight.

The mercantile marine tricolor of black, white and red is emblematic of the joining of the Hohenzollern black and white with the red and white, which was the ensign of the Hanseatic league. This flag came into being when the North German Confederacy was established, Nov. 25, 1867, at the close of the Austro-Prussian war. The red and white represent the commercial prosperity of the nation, while the black and white symbolize the strong arm of the state prepared to protect and foster it.

Nowhere have historical events caused so much change in the standards and national ensigns of a country as in France. The oriflamme and the chape de St. Martin were succeeded at the end of the sixteenth century, when Henry III., the last of the house of Valois, came to the throne, by the white standard powdered fleur-de-lis. That in turn gave place to the famous tricolor which was introduced at the time of the revolution, but the origin of that flag and its colors is a disputed question. Some maintain that the intention was to combine in the flag the blue of the chape de St. Martin, the red of the oriflamme and the white flag of the Bourbons. By others the colors are said to be those of the city of Paris. Yet again other authorities assert that the flag is copied from the shield of the Orleans family as it appeared after Philippe Egalite had knocked off the fleur-de-lis.—Kansas City Star.

VAGARIES OF THE TIDE.

Mysterious Currents, the Secrets of Which No One Has Solved.

There are as many vagaries in the waters as in the winds. Why, for instance, should great ocean currents send their warm waters across the wide Pacific and Atlantic? Other and equally mysterious currents exist in well nigh all parts of the world.

It is on record that the sea has run for weeks out of the Java sea, through the strait of Sunda and thence back again for a like period without any perceptible rise and fall during those times.

Then there is the equatorial current that flows into the Caribbean sea, the ever flowing current to the eastward around Cape Horn, the cold stream flowing from the icy regions of the north past Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and along the Atlantic coast to the extreme end of Florida, the continual current running with a velocity of four from to five knots an hour through the strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean sea, the swift current running across the rocks and shoals off the end of Billiton Island, which apparently starts from nowhere and ends somewhere in the vicinity of the same place, and the current which, starting halfway up the China sea, runs from two to three knots an hour to the northeast and finally ends abruptly off the north end of Luzon. Then we have those tidal vagaries known the world over as bores. Those that run up the Hugli and Irawadi rivers, from side to side, till they reach their limit, often tearing the ships from their anchorage, originate nobody knows where or why.

At Singapore it has been observed for days at a time that there has been but one rise and fall in the twenty-four hours.—Boston Globe.

The Seckel Pear.

The Seckel pear is one of the sweetest and delectable fruits that grow. As another describes it, "The flesh is melting, juicy and most exquisitely and delicately flavored." That is just what it is. And the tree on which this pear grows is beautiful and vigorous, which indicates that nature has a great fondness for it. The pear is named after a Mr. Seckel of Philadelphia, on whose estate in 1817 the Seckel pear started on its happy career. Some one writing in 1847 said, "The parent tree still lives about three miles from Philadelphia."—Pittsburgh Press.

Too Suggestive.

"The health officer advised me to not every man with whom we had domestic dealings if he was careful to boil the water he used in his business."

"Well, I asked the milkman first. And what do you think? He got mad and wanted to lick me."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

No Previous Employment.

"You say, Bastus, that you want work for your wife," said Gumbasta, eyeing the husky darty before him from head to foot. "Was she ever employed before?"

"No, sir," replied the negro nonchalantly, "dis was her first marriage."—New York Times.

The Sleep of Life.

We talk about the sleep of death. How much deeper, how much sadder, is the sleep of life—the unresponsive heart, the unawakened mind, the hand palsied by lack of will to do!

She Will Change Them.

Mrs. Crawford—Although my daughter is such a big girl, she's still afraid of the dark. Mrs. Crabshaw—Don't worry about that, my dear. She'll soon be in love.—Judge.

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The Case of the Physician

who died a few days ago in the act of signing his will and leaving this document uncompleted is another illustration of the danger of delay in attending to such important matters.

The making of a will, the selection of executors or trustees, should all be done while you are in good health and with judgment and decision unimpaired.

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